

Listing of Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claim 1. (Canceled)

Claim 2. (Canceled)

Claim 3. (currently amended)

A method according to claim-~~1~~ 13, wherein the electrode is supplied with constant-~~energy~~ power during the welding process proper.

Claim 4. (currently amended)

A method according to claim-~~2~~ 14, wherein the introduction of-~~energy~~ power during the start program is controlled in a manner that the mean value of the pulsed-~~energy~~ power corresponds with the amplitude of the set welding current for the subsequent, constant-energy welding process proper.

Claim 5. (currently amended)

A method according to claim-~~1~~ 13, wherein the parameters of

the start program and, ~~in particular,~~ the pulse parameters ~~like~~  
in the form of pulse height, pulse width, pulse frequency, pulse  
break and, ~~possibly,~~ curve shape are freely settable at the power  
source.

Claim 6. (currently amended)

A method according to claim ~~1~~ 13, wherein the parameters of  
the start program by a control ~~and/or evaluation~~ device provided  
in the welding apparatus or in the power source are automatically  
fixed or varied as a function of the parameters of the welding  
process proper.

Claim 7. (Previously Presented)

A method according to claim 6, wherein the parameters of the  
start program are automatically fixed or varied as a function of  
the amplitude of the welding current used for the welding process  
proper.

Claim 8. (Previously Presented)

A method according to claim 6 wherein that the parameters  
of the start program are automatically fixed or varied as a  
function of the material thickness ~~and/or~~ material of the

workpieces to be welded or further parameters of the welding process proper.

Claim 9. (currently amended)

A method according to claim 6, wherein several start programs having different parameters or curve shapes are defined and stored, and that said defined and stored start programs are used ~~and/or varied~~ by the control ~~and/or evaluation~~ device to select the parameters for the start program.

Claim 10. (currently amended)

A method according to claim ~~1~~ 13, wherein the start program is carried out for a presettable period of time after the ignition of the electric arc.

Claim 11. (currently amended)

A method according to claim 10, wherein during said presettable period of time after the ignition of the electric arc the electrode is supplied with constant ~~energy~~ power.

Claim 12. (currently amended)

A method according to claim 11, wherein the electrode,

during the presettable period of time after the ignition of the electric arc, is supplied with constant ~~energy~~ power different from that supplied during the welding process proper.

Claim 13. (New) A welding method using a non-consumable electrode comprising the following steps:

igniting an electric arc between an electrode and a set of workpieces to be joined;

supplying an electrode with power from a power source after said ignition of said electric arc between said electrode and said set of workpieces to be joined;

performing a start program after igniting said electric arc but before introducing an additional material;

wherein said electrode is supplied with pulsed energy in a form of current or voltage pulses over a presettable period of time causing a liquid melt bath to vibrate;

performing a welding process after termination of said start program.

Claim 14. (New) A tack welding method using a non-consumable electrode comprising the following steps:

igniting an electric arc between an electrode and a set of workpieces to be joined;

supplying an electrode with power from a power source after said ignition of said electric arc between said electrode and said set of workpieces to be joined;

performing a start program after igniting said electric arc but before introducing an additional material;

wherein said electrode is supplied with pulsed energy in a form of current or voltage pulses over a presettable period of time causing a liquid melt bath to vibrate; and

performing a welding process after termination of said start program by supplying the electrode with constant energy.